The TOWER

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Volume 8. December, 1938 Number 1.

ALABAMA COLLEGE
MONTEVALLO, ALABAMA

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Contents

Equation	Jean Jenkins	4
Night Thoughts	Madie Belle Ward	4
The Mystery of Roger Crane	Imogene Phillips	5
Poem	Mallie Knight	8
Tyranny	Madie Belle Ward	8
Essay	Sara Mac Weed	9
Futility	Frances Hodnett	9
I Wonder	Mary Sterne	10
Mote and Beam	Frances Truman	10
Fledgling	Sara Mac Weed	10
A Dear Little Fable	Virginia Moore	11
"Heretic"	Celia Methvin	12
Cotton Mill	Mary Lee Jones	13
Dawn	Jean Jenkins	13
Death Is A Bird	Mary Sterne	14
The Important Question	Madie Belle Ward	14
First Degree Marriage	Virginia Moore	15
Raindrops	Jean Jenkins	22
Kinship	Madie Belle Ward	22
There Are No Rules	Lovelorn	23
Birthday	Virginia Moore	23

EQUATION

There is no happiness so great
As human minds invent,
Nor sadness too all-powerful
For man to circumvent.

Man doesn't sink from ecstasy
To sorrow's hopeless dust;
The mediocrity of life
Makes it all too just.

—*Jean Jenkins,* '39.

NIGHT THOUGHTS

The silence was louder and more poignant
Than a thousand voices murmuring
Their moans and incantations—
The moon and stars were tense
With listening to night's slight insinuations.
The silence brooding heavily
Packed a million hours in one,
While it made me grieve for all the griefs
Since life was first begun.
It was for some an hour, a minute—less;
For me infinity since you have gone.

—*Madie Belle Ward,* '40.

THE MYSTERY OF ROGER CRANE

"There was I, faced with the problem of finding a solution to my own murder story," said Jeffery Lane to his friend Lucy. "This is the first story I ever wrote that I couldn't solve."

They were seated in Lane's living room. Lucy noticed that he looked older and extremely tired.

"What did you do?" She asked.

"It's a long story. But, here, I'll let you read what I had to puzzle over. Of course, there were other preliminary factors, but you see here what I was up against. It haunted me night and day. I was powerless to change the story or to find a solution. I felt that there should be someone to help me—but I'll tell you about that when you finish the death scene."

Lucy took the paper he held out.

"Slowly the clock ticked," she read, "and a shaft of light from a partly opened blind fell upon the grandfather clock. Roger Crane watched that pendulum swinging back and forth with regular precision.

"With a cry he sprang to his feet and rushing to the window, he unlocked it, closed the blind, and relocked the window. The room was completely dark now. The striking of quarter hours told Roger Crane that he had fifteen minutes to live. His panting could be heard all over the room as he made his way back to his chair. The door! He *had* locked it? Slowly he made his way to the door. Of course he'd locked it.

"Nearer and nearer the hand of the clock came to twelve. Roger shuddered in his chair. He grabbed at the whiskey bottle that he knew was on the table. He found the lamp and pulled the switch, flooding the room with light. He poured himself a drink with a shaking hand, and with one gulp he drank it. The clock began to strike the final hour. With a choking cry he rose from his chair. He fell to the floor, dead."

Lucy looked up at Jeffery and handed the story back to him.

"What killed him?"

"That's just it. I don't know. I thought and thought of who could help me. Whilo Wance. He'd be the one. So I took my secretary and went to see him. She took the interview down and I added the brackets so it would be clearer.

Interview No. 1

"Good morning, Mr. Wance."

"Good morning, Mr. Lane. This is Sergeant Heather."

"How do you do?"

"How do you do?"

"Mr. Wance, I have a problem, and I would appreciate your help." (I handed him the chapter and he read it.)

"Very interesting. It reminds me of a case* I had. In this case the murderer, a cousin, watched through a keyhole until fifteen minutes before he wanted the man to die. He cut a hole in the rug and ran a wire into the man's favorite chair and out under the door. The wire was wrapped around the spring and in the center of the spring was a small vial of poisonous gas. The murderer pulled the wire which tilted the bottle so the gas spilled on the leather which added to its strength. The door was locked from the inside, and it had me stopped for a while."

"Thank you so much. I must go now. I—I have an engagement."

"Glad to have been of some help. Come back anytime."

"I tell you, Lucy, I felt up against it. I thought of Mr. and Mrs. Charlie. They were successful in 'The Fat Man', and 'Right After the Fat Man'. You remember Dick (as in drunkard) and Dora (as in dumb)."

Interview No. 2

"Good evening, Mr. Charlie."

"Good evening, Mr. Lane. This is my wife. Hand Mr. Lane a drink, darling."

"No thank you, Mr. Charlie, since you are quite successful in catching criminals maybe you can help me solve my problems."

"Yes, indeed, hand me a drink, Dora."

"You've got one, dear."

"So I have, my pet. (He drinks it.) Now, give me another drink. Now for your mystery." (He takes the paper to read it.)

"I want to read it, Dick." She insisted. "Here, hold these cocktails." (She takes it but is interrupted by Chrysanthemum, the dog, chewing on the paper. Mr. Charlie sips first his wife's drink and then his.)

"It's a perplexing problem. If his whiskey was like this Scotch it would have killed him, but evidently it was better. My guess is that the Grandmother killed him. Tricky things, these grandmothers." (Just then the dog "unconverted" the convertable bar. Liquor spilled over the floor. I saved the manuscript and rushed for the door.)

* The Petunia Mystery Case.

"Damn, (I heard Dick say) that was my last bottle of bourbon!"

"Dispair was upon me, Lucy," said Lane. "As one last ray of hope I went to see Wally Wang, the Chinese detective.

Interview No. 3

"Good evening, Mr. Wang."

"As Confucius says, 'When morning goes, it is bad for morning, but good for evening'."

"Er-yes, Mr. Wang. I need your help in solving a murder."

"As you Americans say, 'Help a friend today, gone tomorrow and come back like cake on troubled milk and honey!' " (A young man comes in).

"Hi, Pop." (He says).

"Meet my number fifteen son."

"Howdy." (Says he).

'Hello." (Says I).

"Mr. Lane wants us to help him solve a murder."

"Okay. It's the butler."

"Run along, son."

"You dern tootin'."

"As Confusious says, 'The younger the mind, the bigger the mouth with the mind closed and the mouth open.' " (He takes the paper and reads it).

"The man killed himself, I should say. But then, as Confucius says—"

"I'm afraid I must rush off. I'm late for an appointment."

"As Confucius says, 'Good evening.' "

"There, Lucy, you see what a time I had. There's more yet. I went home and got drunk and as I started slaying dragons and petunias, I saw Roger Crane. He was sitting where you are now, Lucy.

"I promise you, Lucy, I've given up writing mystery stories and drinking. I've taken up writing nursery stories. About Isabelle, the cow, even.

"He said to me, 'You dope, of course I was dead, but you overlooked the simplest solution of all. I was dead drunk!' "

—*Imogene Phillips, '39.*

If ink fiilled
the rivers
with a black
velvetness,
and paper
grew as leaves
from tall
trees of
straight
pen staffs,
and chalk dust
floated down
as snow:
If houses were built
of stiff
backed books,
pavements
of smooth
erasers.
Such a silly
world—
to be
lighted
by the
reflection
of sunlight
on a copper
letter opener.

—*Mallie Knight,* '41.

TYRANNY

Strange—we have let the idea hold itself,
Hedged behind a wall of words and symbols,
A sacred wall—and let the idea perish.

—*Madie Belle Ward,* '40.

ESSAY

Fleeting my thought on gauzy wings,
On awkward feet my words;
Lilting tunes my glad heart sings
In ecstasy with mocking-birds.
Only my lips have failed with words.

Gleaming with golden magic leaves
My glistening tree of designs;
Plucking my visiom, I haste 'neath the eaves
To trace my magic in gilded lines.
Stumbling pen, like my lips, resigns.

—*Sara Mac Weed, '39.*

FUTILITY

When the last of the wax
From the candle of Life has dropt—
No longer shall we be:
O, you foolish creatures
Who go forth
Gaily, to meet the coming day,
Why your empty dreams
Of a land so bright and fair?
Today:
Living, loving, dreaming,
Cringing, hating, fearing.
Tomorrow:
Nothingness.

—*Frances Hodnett, '39.*

I WONDER

How must it feel to be shut in the ground,
Under the green grass and earth,
When over and above the storm clouds gather
And rain begins to fall?
Then a lull, and a hush,
And the storm is over,
And the sun bursts forth again?

—*Mary Sterne,* '41.

MOTE AND BEAM

The Scriptures say to cast the beam from your own eyes,
Ere we a mote from others try to pluck;
She's such a little soul, though, with such a great big beam,
And mine was just a little hidden mote—
Forgive her, God, for finding my small fault for me
And putting off her own a little while.

—*Frances Truman,* '39.

FLEDGLING

Gasping, it lay by the powdery road—
Fledgling, half-feathered, unable to fly—
An Idea, young, tender, in search of abode.
Grasping it rudely, I caused it to die.

—*Sara Mac Weed,* '39.

A DEAR LITTLE FABLE

Once upon a time there was a beautiful little fairy who lived in the capitol of Fairyland. This beautiful little fairy was a *very* beautiful little fairy. In fact, she was the most beautiful little fairy in all fairyland. This beautiful little fairy was one of those noble portrayers of the drama. She acted. She was the Fairy king's favorite of all the fairy actresses, and the king saw, at the end of each week, that this beautiful little fairy was supplied with enough golden-rods and silver bachelor-buttons to last until the next week, to pay the butcher and the baker and the fire-fly maker—and maybe have enough left over to put in the fairy bank for a rainy day!

But one day the poor king of Fairyland was called away—his wife was having a divorce—and the rainy days kept coming and coming until at last the beautiful little fairy had only one-half a golden-rod and one slightly wilted silver bachelor-button left. She was sitting in her magnificent bower, surrounded by butter-cups, sweet-peas, corn-flowers, milkweeds, and honey-suckles, rubbing her poor little stomach because it was so empty, when there came a knock on the door.

The beautiful little fairy hastily gave her stomach one more rub and her nose a flick with her soft thistle puff and called, "Come in."

The door opened and the beautiful little fairy's publicity agent came in.

"Hi, Fay," he greeted her. "Here's where we eat. I got a contract here for you to endorse Baby Breath Face Powder and Six Flower Perfume." He buzzed around rapidly, as publicity fairies are apt to do.

The little fairy had been quite happy at first, but now she was sad again.

"No," she said, "I'm sorry. I'll have to refuse. I don't use Baby Breath Face Powder or Six Flower Perfume, and I cannot prostitute my art or my morals." And she started rubbing her stomach again.

—*Virginia Moore, '39.*

"HERETIC"

Don't rave at me, Parson.
I'll have none of hell.
That crackling, satanic fury is
not for me.
Yes, I believe in hell.
Do you find that strange?
(You pock-marked hypocrite.
Look hellward yourself, or else
See your angels with dirty feet.)
So you're afraid, too, that I
don't believe in God.
No, I suppose I don't believe
In your stained-glass saints—
Or your heavy brethren
Who goggle over the collection plate.
I've seen your first tenor
Take a drink with your soprano
On Saturday night,
Then come to the
Quiet, cool, God-place—
Fold their hands and sing,
"Nearer, My God, to Thee."
But I suppose you're not to blame,
(You, the licentious shepherd,)
Still, you must leave me my own God
Who can awe, heal and
Take me through the Valley of Shadow
Without my fearing such hell
As your religion brings.
Let me die in sanity, Parson,
Take your religion to the gutter
where it belongs.

—*Celia Methvin*, '40.

COTTON MILL

Life.
Weighing potatoes for buyers with snuff-ringed mouths.
Complaining, compelling customers.
Smiles conditioned to the insistant demand of the repeated price on prints.
Pumping gas for joking men with jesting wives who make a job for the
Misused
Moneyed
Merchant
Of cotton mill
Life.

Life.
Skinny-legged children begging for candy.
Happy, hilarious humans.
Women with caloused hands and uncombed hair; men with hairy chests and no shirts.
Laughing, loitering adolescents, happy in their state, these who constitute the
Common
Contented
Class
Of Cotton Mill
Life.

—*Mary Lee Jones*, '39.

DAWN

Shyly,
Hesitating Dawn,
Like a flushed new bride,
Slips through the shadows,
Gathers mist garments,
Breathes new life.

—*Jean Jenkins*, '39.

DEATH IS A BIRD

Death is a bird.
I am his mate.
Come singing, my raven,
Your tune I await.

Why do I tremble
When I hear your song?
Have I lived on earth
Ere time so long—

I am ready, my raven,
To fly hence with thee.
Fear has been banished,
Hope is with me.

Death is a bird.
I am his mate.
Come singing, my raven,
Your tune I await.

—*Mary Sterne,* '41.

THE IMPORTANT QUESTION

WAR hovers over a world—
Lulled by passivity
Warped by prejudice
Confused by propaganda
What will WAR do?

—*Madie Belle Ward,* '40.

FIRST DEGREE MARRIAGE

We were all in the mess tent when we first heard it. The news started at the door and traveled down the tables, leaving a trail of smiles and incredulous wonder behind it. Artie Williams was married! The news was so amazing and so unlooked-for that we took it quietly. The idea of poor, scared little Artie Williams being married was more than we could take along with Pierre's biscuits and sausages. But then, when we read the article in *Variety,* the funniness of the situation got us and all that day chuckles could be heard coming from the most unexpected places, like one of Mrs. Johns' wardrobe chests where she was hanging up costumes, and the cage where Sasha, one of the circus' two big cats, was being fed by Hank Smith, the animal trainer. Even Bruce Claybrooke the assistant manager laughed heartily over it, and it took something to make Mr. Claybrooke laugh.

"Yes," he said when some of us mentioned it to him, "it was a surprise, but I should have been prepared. Last week Artie came up and demanded—not asked, mind you, but demanded—two weeks off." He sat back to let us take in this bit of news which we promptly did. We knew Artie had been gone for almost a week, but he had been looking kinda peaked for awhile and Jack O'Brien, the boss of the band was complaining that his star clarinet player was so sour he puckered the faces of the customers. So we just presumed that he had kinda taken a permanent vacation from the Claybrooke and Denson circus. Mr. Denson was off on some business and Mr. Claybrooke was so close-mouthed you'd never get anything out of him, and Artie was so easy to browbeat that he'd never think of appealing his case to the union if he got fired, so what else could we think?

Artie Williams was—shall we be kind?—timid. He was a little bit of a man, about five feet four. He had big ears, but his pale eyes were so beseeching that no one had the cruelty to call him "Rabbit." He was perpetually blushing. If someone spoke to him, he blushed, and if someone told a dirty joke, he flamed. Not that he was averse to a good one. He'd laugh in that squeaky voice of his all the time he was blushing, and one of the band boys swears he heard him tell Jack O'Brien a joke once that was a lollapoloosa! However, that remains to be proved.

It was only when he was playing the clarinet, leading the melody for the band. that Artie forgot that he was a worm, one of the sort that never turns. He would lift the horn, kept beautiful by hours of con-

stant shining, close his eyes, purse his lips and become another man. And he was a wizard with that horn. He could have a whole tent of people swaying, their eyes closed, the act in front of them completely forgotten. Every where we went Artie's reputation went ahead of us, and there was always a bunch of swing hounds that flocked around, just to hear him play. Jack O'Brien and his trumpet were almost amateurish beside him. People often wondered why Artie stayed with such a small outfit, but if you knew Artie you understood. He was the kind that was happy in a rut.

So you know why we were all so astonished and tickled when Artie got married.

Jack O'Brien got a telegram three days later that didn't sound at all like Artie. It said:

Arriving on 11:15 train, Centre. Have wonderful surprise.
Meet train with reception committee.

Artie.

We all knew, of course, what Artie's surprise was. What we didn't know was what kind of a surprise. *Variety* carried only the simple but eloquent notice: "Today another of our little girls took the fatal step. Miss Karen de Loan (Kattie Smitz) became Mrs. Artemus Percy Williams in the Justice of Peace's office out at Green's village. Mr. Williams is affiliated with Claybrooke and Denson Brothers. Good luck Kattie, we mean Karen."

So you know that we were all at Centre's little shackeldy depot well before 11:15. All of us were still trying to guess what the very new Mrs. Artemus Percy (Good Gosh) Williams would be like.

Paul Delano thought she must be one of those little cuties who packed 'em in on the bald-headed row. Pierre, our pure imported French chef thought that maybe she was one of the Paris importations. Mrs. Johns was sure she must be a "real sweet home girl to take care of Artie," while Hank Smith was sure she must be at least six feet tall and weigh 200 if she ever got Artie Williams to the altar.

Well, the train pulled in and the band started playing in their grandest fashion. We had arranged a sort of a welcome committee, more as a joke than anything else, and they went into action. They had huge banners with "Welcome Artie and the Missus" painted on them. The committee ranged themselves in two rows, a sort of an avenue to the door of the one passenger coach. Suddenly Artie's rear came into view.

He was helping the porter get about a dozen bags into the vestibule. He stepped back and let the grinning black come down. He looked up and saw us and he started blushing. Then all of a sudden he quit blushing—just like he had turned off a faucet or something. He raised himself up about an inch, threw out his chest, and took in the crowd, the banners and the band like he'd been used to them all his life. He turned and beckoned to someone in the car whom we couldn't see for the grimy windows, and then she came out. Boy, what a dame! Everybody had been wrong. She wasn't a cutie, she wasn't from Paris, she wasn't a home-body, and she only came to Artie's chin.

She stood there, all four feet eleven of her. Her blue eyes, the rare kind that are fringed all around, opened wide. She had on a little turned back hat that showed gold hair so natural looking you'd never know it came out of a bottle. Her skin didn't remind you of peaches and cream, nothing as common as that. It was more like, as Pete Marcus, the romantic member of the clown trio said, magnolias with a new moon shining down on them, sorta smooth and almost pure white. It was a healthy white, though. She didn't look ghost-like at all. She was real, almost too real, for most of us had, even after Artie's telegram, doubted he was married.

She was dressed in what Mrs. Johns liked to refer to as "the height of fashion," and while her clothes didn't exactly whisper to themselves they weren't so loud they screamed at you. On her ungloved little hand we could see the modest diamond and platinum band that must have cost Artie plenty. It had that quiet look of class about it.

Well, we stood there, and when she gathered that all this celebration was for her and Artie, she smiled. Her smile was nice, not one of those all-teeth things, nor yet one of the tight-lipped kind. Just a nice smile that managed somehow to include everybody. She raised her hand to us and then smiled up at Artie, standing now with his arm around her shoulders.

The old saying that marriage makes a new man was certainly true in this case. You wouldn't have recognized Artie. He was so self-important it was funny. The next week or two he went around ordering the baggage boys to be sure and see that his horn was all right, that Kattie (that's what she asked us to call her) had the best seat in the truck (if he was going to be busy and couldn't see to it himself) that her tent was set up on the dryest spot when it rained. He even got to

the point that he took a swing at O'Brien's jaw for calling him Artemus. Yes, Artie was married all right.

Artie was most definitely married. The only trouble was he didn't stay married very long. None of us knew exactly what started it. We thought maybe it was because one of the dumb boys Pierre keeps around to help wait on tables spilt some soup in her lap, or it might have been because she found ants in her bed at Cottonville. Anyway, three weeks after her and Artie joined us at Centre she left. Artie collapsed like a stuck balloon. Him and Kattie had made such a cute couple that Mr. Claybrooke had let him get away with his act, pretending that he owned the show and bossing us around. Mr. Denson would have batted his ears down in a minute, but he was still gone.

Kattie evidently adored Artie, she followed him around with her eyes when she was not hanging on his arm, and she got on well with us. The only reason for her leaving that we could get out of Artie was that she didn't like the circus, which, if it was true, was a shame, because she had a dancing act that would have packed 'em in three deep if she had done it under the big top.

I don't guess she was mad at Artie, he went to see her whenever he could get off. In fact, she managed to always be pretty close to the town we were playing. Artie would get a letter written in her little curly-cues of handwriting and he'd go off that afternoon if we didn't have a late matinee and come back in time for the night performance looking happy, for about an hour. Then he'd be the same old Artie again. Ready, willing and able to be stepped on. Only he couldn't play the clarinet like he used to. O'Brien cursed and shouted at him and threatened to fire him if he didn't pep up, but it didn't do any good. Artie still played like any dime-a-dozen, correspondence school clarinet player.

Then one day Kattie came to see him. Artie livened up and started ordering us around the way he had before she left. We grinned and jumped every time he spoke. We were genuinely fond of Kattie and we felt sorry for Artie. Pierre cooked her one of his famous chocolate nut cakes and decorated the top with his own version of the spelling of "Mrs. Williams." Mrs. Johns tried to make her feel at home by dragging out her ruffled red rocker and footstool, but it was no use She wanted a divorce! While she was talking to Mrs. Johns, Artie went around to each of us and begged us to try to make her stay. He asked O'Brien, with tears in his eyes, to see if he couldn't make her stay.

"No," O'Brien said sadly, "she's one woman with a mind of her own." Later he showed me three fingernail scratches on his hand. "And I wasn't doing a thing except trying to get her to put her head on my shoulder and tell me her troubles." But knowing O'Brien like I do, I don't blame the little lady, not that O'Brien's not good looking. He is.

All we could do was of no use. Kattie left on the 6:00 o'clock train. Artie looked like he was contemplating suicide.

There might have been some such crazy idea in his head that night, for his actions didn't prove to be any too rational.

It happened just after Dora, the dog woman, did her act. It was time for the big cats to come on. We hadn't had this act for long because our feline population, heretofore, had been limited to Sultan, the moth-eaten, anemic lion who was so old he slept all the time. But Mr. Denson had picked up Sasha, a genuine Indian tiger, cheap, along with the contract of Hank Smith, an animal trainer, from some outfit that went bust. Hank had worked out an act with Sasha doing most of the performing and Sultan just sitting. Usually they were the most gentle cats you can imagine, even working together that way. But tonight, some drunk in the reserved section threw a pop bottle and hit Sultan on the head. He gave one roar and jumped off his perch. Hank had him back in a minute but while he was concentrating on him, Sasha went wild. She let out a couple of grown-up meows and streaked for the entrance. The band platform was erected there, and Artie was on the end of the row, right above where Sasha passed. She wasn't bothering anybody, just thinking about getting out, but naturally Artie didn't know this, so he leaned over and wrapped his clarinet over her head as she went by. When they finally got them separated Artie was clawed into what looked like a million red ribbons and Sasha was out cold with that clarinet around her neck.

They took Artie to the hospital where they assured us that outside of a few scars he'd be all right. Most of the red had been his band uniform.

He became a hero in less than overnight. "Brave clarinet player saves crowd from man-eating tiger," "Hero near death after fight with wild tiger." " 'It was nothing,' says Artie Williams in interview."

Kattie came rushing up to the hospital, but when Artie begged her, looking his weakest and palest, to stay with him, she refused. After she learned he was all right she left.

Mr. Denson came back the next day and went over to the hospital to sign Artie up on a new, long term contract. He was proving to be the nine day's wonder. Mr. Denson and Hank had already tried to figure out an act whereby Artie could grapple with Sasha every night, but Artie, for once in his life, away from Kattie, was firm.

"No, Mr. Denson, I'm leaving. No, I don't know where I'm going. I just can't stay here. Kattie's gone—" He gulped and turned his head toward the wall.

Then Mr. Denson got mad. "Why, you young ingrate," he bellowed in his very best furious boss manner. "After all I've done for you." He was shaking with rage, especially his bay window. "You, you'll go and sign up with some other outfit. How much did they offer you?" He was kinda calming down, wondering if he could top the offer. Artie was just what the show needed. Why even playing in the band, Mr. Denson figured he'd be a big asset. Mr. Claybrooke could stand in the center of the ring and announce that Mr. Artie Williams would now play a solo on the very, self-same clarinet with which he conquered Sasha, the man-eating tiger, who could be seen outside in the side show for only ten cents.

"No, I ain't goin' to sign up with any other outfit. I think maybe I'll go out west."

"No, you're not going to do any such thing." Mr. Denson could see that all Artie needed was a little overbearing. "I'll pay you thirty-five dollars a week."

"No, I—

"You do as I say, young man. If you don't I'll have you barred from every circus in this country. I'll sue you, I'll get every penny you've got, I'll take you back and let Sasha finish the job she started."

"Artie, are you going to let that man talk to you that way?"

There was Kattie. She had got kinda worried about Artie and had come back to make sure he was all right. She was hopping mad.

"I said are you going to let this fat, puffy sourpuss talk to you this way?" She never had seen Mr. Denson and she didn't know who he was.

"Honey, hush, this is my boss."

"I don't care who he is Artie Williams. Mr. Claybrooks is your boss and he doesn't talk that way to you."

"Everybody talks that way to me, Honey. I just can't help it, they all run over me." Artie's grievances were coming to the top now. "He just wants to pay me thirty-five dollars a week."

Kattie stared at Artie. "Artie, Hon," she demanded, "are you sick? I mean does your head feel all right?" And it ain't a bit of wonder that she did stare. You see, she never had seen Artie in such a mild mood.

He went on. "But I don't blame him. I ain't no good. I can't even play. Nobody'll come to hear me. They all come to hear O'Brien, anyway."

This was the old Artie that we were all familiar with, but to Kattie he was a new and strange being.

"You see, young woman, whoever you are," Mr. Denson sputtered, "he admits that he's not worth any more."

"Oh, yes he is. I have Artie Williams under contract to ME, Mister. And if you want to do business with him you have to do it with me." Which was a lie but Mr. Denson didn't know it.

"All right, how much?"

"One hundred a week."

Mr. Denson signed for that. And he was glad of it, too. He left with Artie looking at Kattie with adoring eyes. She turned to him.

"Why didn't you tell me that you were like this, Darling? I always thought that you were so bossy, that's why I—I was afraid you'd get to ordering me around, too, and I couldn't stand for that."

"You mean—" And what she did mean finally soaked through Artie's bandages and thick skull. She was coming back to him.

"Yes," she said looking out of the window to hide the happy light in her own eyes. "Yes, I'll have to come back just to keep people from running over you the rest of your life."

—*Virginia Moore,* '39.

RAINDROPS

Pearled silver beads
Slide down the oily leaves
From their silken cord.
From the tip
They slip
To their longing mother
Earth.

—*Jean Jenkins,* '39.

KINSHIP

They are kin!
Those who have wakened to the self-same thought,
Have followed from afar in eager search, and fought
The same despair that would have turned them back
From Truth's elusiveness.
Each, panting in return triumphant,
Tethering his thought in human sphere,
Knows not the other existent—
But there is rare kinship here.

—*Madie Belle Ward,* '40.

THERE ARE NO RULES

As a Royal Canadian Mounted Policewoman, I would not qualify. I do not get my man. *Any* man, maybe. *The* man, no!

I read every article on the ensnarement of the male, but *Live Alone and Like It* is the most applicable book that I have yet found.

I have read that you must be hard to get, and you must not be too hard to get. Give them enough rope—not too much or too little. Up to now I'm the one that gets entangled and trips, and is left holding the rope. My psychology never works. I use the right system on the wrong boy, and the wrong system on the right boy.

I have tried to hitch my wagon to a star (Nelson Eddy), but all I get is someone no one else will have.

I console myself that I am too intellectual for the average man, being a college girl, you know. I will sacrifice marriage for a career so I can save the South for Progressive Education.—But if you heard of a new way to a man's heart, will you let me know at once?

—*Lovelorn.*

BIRTHDAY

Spencer Thatcher locked his office door with a weary hand. Whew! A twelve hour stretch at a desk certainly did take the starch out of a man. He'd been a fool to work so hard, but the home office was awfully particular about reports being in on time.

He looked up, startled, as a low green car drew up at the curb. He threw a friendly greeting to the young face that grinned out at him in the half gloom of the summer twilight.

"Hi ya, Spence, going home?" the boy shouted. "Come on and I'll give you a lift."

Spencer grinned, the nerve of that Bobby, offering him a lift in his own car. He climbed in, a bit stiffly.

Hello, Bobby—and who gave you permission to drag out my car in all this dust and dirt! He gave Bobby a half poke which that young man artfully dodged.

"Aw, Grandmama sent me down here to get you. She said it was bad luck to be late to a birthday dinner—" He stopped short. "Ah, gee, I wasn't supposed to tell you that—don't tell Grandmama, will ya, huh?"

"Oke, skip it," Spence said absently. So they were giving him a birthday dinner, were they. He wished he could skip *that*. Once past the happy side of forty and the birthdays rolled around too quickly to suit him. He stopped his thoughts with an effort. He'd be talking like an old man in a minute.

The short drive home was made in silence. Bobby silent with the contentment of youth and Spencer silent, fighting back memories, kaleidoscoping pictures of other birthdays; his twenty-first, the day Mary had married Herbert without even bothering to break off *their* engagement, his twenty-seventh, spent in an army camp thinking up new names to call the Germans, his thirtieth, coming a week after his youngest brother had shot himself because he got that Davis girl in a mess—Silly fool, Spencer reflected. A trip to the hospital would have been the best way out, that's what happened eventually anyway.

He succeeded in arranging his features into a surprised expression when his tiny, fragile mother met him at the door and bustled him into the dining room to the loaded dinner table. He tried not to think about how tired he was and that food was the last thing he wanted, he tried

not to think how foolish his oldest brother, James, looked, standing there at one end of the table a silly grin on his face, shouting, "Surprise, surprise." He tried not to note how much like a fish Jenny, his only sister and Bobby's mother, looked with her hair fixed in such precise, scaly waves and her mouth puckered into such a smile. He looked across at his mother, almost silhouetted against the massive furniture of the dining room that was older than Spencer himself. God, she was wrinkled. She must be nearly seventy. Let's see, married at seventeen, yes, she must be at least sixty-nine.

Now she was bringing out the cake, white with red trimming. Nice of them to omit the candles, he thought bitterly. After all, forty-six candles on the top of just one cake would look rather queer. Forty-six! For all of a minute he felt old. Did he look old? He raised his eyes to the mirror hanging opposite him on the wall. Was that a suggestion of a pouch under his eyes? No, it must be shadows. Darn Mama's dim dining room, anyway.

After supper in the bathroom while he was shaving, he looked more closely. Yes, there were little bags of flesh slowly growing beneath his blue eyes, and he noticed his eyes weren't as blue as they had been once.

He opened the medicine chest above the lavatory. He saw a jar of cold cream, and taking it out, he locked the bathroom door guiltily. Gingerly he rubbed a fingerful under and around both eyes. Cold cream was supposed to lubricate the skin, tighten the muscles—and he didn't want to look old and dried out. He squared himself away from the mirror for a better view. Face still unlined, eyes clear if faded, hair sandy, that bit of gray didn't show at all. Shoulders erect, chest up, what was that joke the boys had pulled about his having a fallen chest? He pulled his stomach in a bit, experimentally. Yes, it helped his looks a lot. Maybe one of those belts for men—

He peered again hopefully in the mirror, dusting talcum over his smooth, well kept skin. Surely Polly wouldn't think he was old. She always treated him as if he was her own age. He thought of her with a little glow that warmed him all over. Now, there was a girl for you. Beautiful, smart, intelligent and sensible. *She* knew the fun he got out of running with the young crowd. She could understand that he didn't want to settle down to an *old* bachelor's life. Why, he was in his prime —and she had sense enough to realize it. She treated him as a boy of twenty, flirting with him, fussing at him and dating him as regularly as she did the other kids around, and he sometimes had hopes of being

treated better. Occasionally he thought he detected an extra note of tenderness in her voice as she spoke to him. If she would only love him! She was his mainstay, his dam against the age he felt creeping up on him, regardless of anything he could do.

He wiped his dripping hands on a towel and stuck his head out the door.

"Hey, Bobby, are you going with me over to Polly's?"

"Yeh," Bobby answered. "How long?" Bobby had a crush on Marjory, Polly's little sixteen year old sister.

"Ya want me to drive," Bobby said hopefully as Spencer was struggling into his pinch-back coat. "It's pretty dark tonight, and the lights are kinda bad and—"

"No," said Spencer shortly. He couldn't see well enough to drive at night, could he. He was too old to take care of himself, was he! He took his glasses out of his pocket and laid them with elaborate care on the table in the hall. "No," he repeated, "I'll drive."

He turned up the drive to Polly's house very carefully. That was a hard, quick turn. He'd almost slid off the road one night.

He stayed in the car while Bobby went to get Polly and Marjory. He didn't know why, except that he liked to see Polly stick her head in the door and smile at him before she got in. It brought back that warm little glow.

He relaxed in the corner of the back seat for a moment, his head against the stiff plush upholstery, then he heard gay young voices.

"Ah, Bobby, I'll bet you're just kidding me. He's not that—" and Marjorie's voice trailed off into its customary giggle. Spencer looked out of the window. Where was Polly, was she sick? There were only two heads in the glare of the porch light.

He opened the door, a question ready on his lips.

Marjory slid in, a flurry of pink organdy and curls. "Oh, Spence," she began excitedly. "Polly couldn't come. Here, she sent you this." And she stuck into his hands a square envelope, heavy stiff paper. He recognized it as being part of the box he had given Polly for Christmas. He ripped it open unhurriedly, but holding his breath. He switched on the overhead light and read the note through.

For one horrible, eternal instant he knew that Polly was tired of him, thought him an old man, and for an instant he was an old man, then the letters stopped squirming and settled down once again into Polly's gay, flourishing handwriting.

"She says here that Lawrence came from Birmingham unexpectedly and that she had to go with him."

He read the last part over to himself again.

"Sorry to have to do this, Spence, but you know how these best boy-friends are, when they want you, they want you."

Polly.

Marjory said nervously. "They went to a dance in Birmingham. She said she hoped you wouldn't mind."

So she was gone to a dance. Spencer didn't like to dance, it tired him out and left him with a curiously old feeling.

"Well," Bobby said after an awkward silence. "Let's get going. What are we gonna do?"

They had been intending to go up to Curry's and get some of Polly's favorite chili and coffee after the movie, now what Spencer wanted to do more than anything else was to go home to bed and cry like a baby, and maybe sleep like one after a while. But, what the heck, there were more girls in the world than Polly. She wasn't the only gay young thing in this town or in his life, either. He said, a little pathetically, "Drive by the drug store and I'll call Mabel."

Getting out of the car he glanced in the plate glass window of the drug store. Head up, shoulders erect. He pulled in his stomach a bit, experimentally. He picked up the phone with a steady hand. There was a gay note in his voice as he said, "2493, please—Hello, Mabel? Oh, Mabel, this is Spence."

—*Virginia Moore*, '39.